

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed November 12, 2003 in connection with the above identified patent application.

By the annexed amendments, claims 1 to 6 and 8 to 16 are pending in this application.

In particular original claim 10 has been amended for the second time, while claim 16 has been amended for the third time.

Independent claim 18 has been deleted.

No new matter has been added by any of the above mentioned amendments.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 10, 16 and 18 were objected due to some informalities. The informalities have been addressed. In claim 10, line 1 the term "the" has been deleted.

In claim 16, lines 3 and 5 the term "realizing" has been amended to "providing".

Claim 18 has been deleted.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 1-6, 8-9 and 11-15 were already allowed.

Claim 10 depends on Claim 1 and is thus also allowable.

CLAIM REJECTIONS-35 USC 103(a)

Claims 16 and 18 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over all at Hall (US 4066285) and over Wexler (DE 29502439.9) in view of Hlavach (US 4700977).

Claim 18 has been deleted. Thus the rejection of Claim 18 is moot.

With respect to claim 16, the Examiner asserts that Hall shows all the claimed structures. Therefore, according to the examiner, it would be obvious for a skilled artisan in view of Hall to

adopt Applicant's method for manufacturing the moulding element and assembling the same to a motor vehicle body.

The Examiner's opinion is respectfully traversed.

Hall sets forth the assembling method steps in detail, from column 3, line 61 to column 4, line 18. In Hall, after the channel 12 is cut into the proper length, the end caps 22 and 23 are pressed onto the opposite ends of the channel 12 with tapered tanks 26 and 29 located in the central groove 13 of the channel 12. The assembly is next aligned with the body of the motor vehicle.

The channel (12) and vehicle body are then drilled through the centres of the holes 27 and 31 of the respective end caps 22 and 23 and **top rivets (33), or other suitable fasteners, such as heat metal screws, are inserted through the holes and engaged so as firmly to secure the end caps 22 and 23 and the channel 12 to the vehicle body"**.

After channel 12, with the assembled end caps 22 and 23, is firmly secured to the vehicle body, the bumper insert 17, having been cut to the same length as the channel 12, is pressed thereon as shown in figure 3 to form the complete trim strip 11".

In particular the bumper insert 17 is axially (or transversely) pushed against channel 12 in order to have teeth 18 and 19 to engage grooves 14 and 16.

The assembling method recited in Applicant's independent amended claim 16 teaches a completely different assembling method with respect to Hall.

First in the present invention the step of engaging the continuous support element to the main section bar occurs **prior to associating the moulding element to the body of the motor vehicle.**

Moreover Claim 16 recites that the engagement between the continuous support element and the main section bar is made by a longitudinal sliding of the continuous support element through the longitudinal seat of the main section bar. Hall on the other hand uses an axial engagement direction and no sliding at all is provided.

One would not modify Hall to use Applicant's method. In Hall to engage the channel to the motorcar bodies it is necessary to drill through the centers of holes 27 and 31 of the end caps 22 and 23 so as to use top rivets or screws for the engaging. Therefore, if the Hall bumper insert is engaged to channel 12 before drilling the motorcar body, as done by applicant, the bumper insert 17 would cover holes 27 and 31 and no drilling at all could be possible. Thus one would not modify Hall to follow Applicant's method.

Also, Hall Bumper 17 would not be modified to slide along grooves as allowed by applicant's method. During the assembling steps, Hall's first holes operate to properly connect the end caps 22 and 23 to the channel 12 by pressing the tapered tanks 26 and 29 in the central groove 13 of the channel 12. Once the two ends are connected, grooves 14 and 16 are no longer laterally accessible. Therefore no sliding can occur at all and no sliding is suggested by Hall.

Applicant's method has advantages unrecognized by Hall. In Applicant's invention, the moulding assembly is fully assembled before mounting it to the car body. Therefore, with Applicant's method, the moulding element can be provided to the final assembler as a finished product.

CONCLUSION

The prior art made of record but not applied by the Examiner has been carefully considered. Applicant agrees it does not make obvious or anticipate the present claims.

All matters having been addressed above and in view of the pending claims and remarks applicant respectfully requests the entry of these amendments, the Examiner's reconsideration of the application and timely allowance of the pending claims.

Applicant's counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James B. Conte", is written over a horizontal line.

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